

SPEECH OF MR. TAYLOR, OF OHIO, ON THE DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATION BILL.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *March 20, 1850.*

The House being in Committee of the Whole, and having under consideration the bill "to supply deficiencies in the appropriations for the service of the fiscal year ending on the 30th of June, 1850," the pending question being on an item providing for salaries of the clerks in the Department of the Interior—

Mr. TAYLOR said: It is exceedingly gratifying, Mr. Chairman, to the personal and political friends of the Secretary of the Interior that, after a discussion of two days, in which eight of the most distinguished gentlemen on the Democratic side of this House have made a systematic and violent attack upon Mr. Ewing, the head of the Department of the Interior, they have only been able to make one serious allegation, showing, as they think, a usurpation of power.

The chief objection which they find to the Secretary of the Interior, in the administration of his most important duties is, that he asks for an appropriation of \$6,800 for clerk hire, which is absolutely necessary for the discharge of the duties of that department, which was created the last day of the last session of Congress. I say, sir, it is a source truly of gratification to me—to the personal and political friends of Mr. Ewing, the distinguished Secretary of the Department of the Interior—that this is the only objection which has yet been heard, in a debate of two days, against this gentleman, or the Administration which appointed him. I do not rise to complain of the discussion. I am glad of it. I knew that there was to be a systematic attack made upon this distinguished gentleman, and upon this new Department of the Interior, because it is one more intimately connected with the internal, the interior administration of the duties of the Federal Government, than all the other departments put together. Nay, sir, there were many reasons for this attack. It is known to this country—it is known to this House—it is known to you, Mr. Chairman—it is known to the gentlemen who made this attack, and cast these reflections upon the Secretary of the Interior, that he is a gentleman far above the necessity of any defence from the humble individual who now speaks in his behalf upon this floor. He is a man who has a reputation commensurate with this nation—won by distinguished services in the other end of the Capitol for a series of years—won since by his laborious efforts in the eminent profession which he adorns and illustrates. By his industry, talents, and high character, he has always fulfilled every expectation that his friends indulged for him, in every public station to which he has been elevated. I do not say too much when I say that that gentleman stands among the highest in this land for talents, character, and reputation as an American statesman. He is eminently qualified for any position in this Government, even for the chief Executive chair; and the Administration, which now presides over this country with so much dignity and credit to the country, has done itself honor in calling that gentleman to the head of the administration of the internal affairs of the Government. It was, to my own knowledge, a personal sacrifice to him to accept of the executive chair of the Department of the Interior. How he has fulfilled the duties of that station let his public acts tell. Look to his report, made to the Executive of the United States, and communicated to Congress with the President's annual message, at the commencement of the present session. Where will you find upon the

records of your country a more able and beautifully written production, admirably setting forth the duties of that department? Its style, its manner, its material, do him credit in an eminent degree. I believe he has performed his duties faithfully. It became the duty of the President of the United States, under the law passed at the last session of Congress, to have this Department of the Interior organized. This law was passed, as I have stated, on the last night of the last session of Congress; it was passed by a large majority in both branches. As has been well said by my colleague before me, (Mr. VINTON,) it was passed on the recommendation of a Democratic Secretary of the Treasury. The bill was drawn by the late Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Walker, upon a consultation with other eminent men in the other branch of Congress. I say, when you pass an act establishing a separate department upon the last day of the last session—a short session, too—just as the former Administration was going out of power, it could not be expected that all the details, every thing requisite to the organization of a new department, should be as systematically, carefully, and fully prepared as it ought to be.

My colleague, former chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, and now a member of that committee, fully explained to this House this morning the necessity for the creation of that department, the duties of that department, and the necessity for these additional clerks—a necessity not foreseen by us at the time the act was passed. It could not then have been foreseen that it would be necessary to have four, five, six, or, if you please, ten additional clerks to organize a new department, in the first place, and to carry on the business of the country, as we find it necessary to have it done by a new department.

Gentlemen see great objection to this appropriation, because, they say, the business of the country has not increased. Sir, the business of the country is always increasing. We live in a great country—a country, with the progress of which in population, wealth, intelligence, every thing that elevates and increases the prosperity of the people, the most intelligent men of the country can scarcely keep pace; and it requires additional force to carry on the Executive Departments. I am surprised when I find gentlemen rising on this floor upon a bill, appropriating perhaps a million and a half of dollars, to supply deficiencies in the appropriations necessary to carry on this Government, and consuming two or three days in discussing whether one of your departments shall have an appropriation of six, eight, or ten thousand dollars for additional clerk hire. What is it but a drop, a single drop, in the great expenditures of the country? You appropriate eight or ten millions annually for the support of the navy; you appropriate nearly the same amount for the support of the army; you appropriate altogether some thirty or forty millions for the public service, and when the head of a Department, controlling more patronage, and controlling it rightly, and supervising more subordinate officers than any other branch of the Government, asks at the hands of Congress an appropriation of six or eight thousand dollars to supply a deficiency, we are met with objections in a debate of two days, the principal features of which are violent attacks upon the Administration.

As regards the statements which have been made in relation to Mr. Ewing, I leave his history, and those who have known him, to speak. Let them vindicate him. We are not afraid of such attacks; he is above them. He does not need my eulogies; but I may say that I do not believe that a purer, more honest, vigilant, or upright public servant has occupied a post in any branch of the Executive department during the existence of the Government.

As I do not often trespass upon the attention of the House, I beg leave to say one thing in connection with this Department of the Interior. I see, with pleasure, that the President of the United States has not, in his annual message, overlooked that great interest of the United States, the agricultural, including the planting and farming interests of the country. He brings it to the notice

of Congress, and recommends that something be done for it by the establishment of an agricultural bureau, to be under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, if it ever shall be the pleasure of Congress to establish it. I trust it will be established; that the best means which the Government can provide will be brought into requisition to do something for the encouragement and protection of this, the great, and I may say, the principal interest of the United States, for it evidently lies at the foundation of all our prosperity. What would be our commerce, what would be our manufactures, but for the planting and farming interest? What encouragement, what assistance, what protection has this great interest ever received at the hands of this Government? From the days of Washington down to the present time, the establishment of an agricultural bureau has been annually recommended in the messages of the Presidents of the United States, and yet no such bureau has been established. Nor has any thing been done to protect this great interest.

Mr. GREEN interposed to a question of order. He understood that, by special agreement, the discussion on this bill was to be confined to questions growing out of it, and that nothing extraneous should be introduced.

Mr. TAYLOR. It is my object to do so. I am only replying to some general remarks which have been thrown out by gentlemen on the other side of the House.

If it be the pleasure of the committee, (continued Mr. T.,) I will submit a very few more remarks in relation to this agricultural bureau, which is to be under the control of the Secretary of the Interior. I was very glad to have the opportunity, a few days since, of voting for an increased number of the report of the Commissioner of Patents. In this connection, I may be pardoned for alluding to a fact. Gentlemen representing the interior districts of the country, and whose constituents are mainly agricultural, look with great interest to that report—being the only one published by Congress, giving statistics and information especially valuable to the farming interests of the country. I hope the agricultural bureau will be established under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, and, if it is necessary to vote additional clerk-hire, I will vote it. I hope it may be established. It will be a source of information and profit to the farmers throughout the country, who should receive encouragement and protection at the hands of the nation.

In relation to the amendment of the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. HAMPTON,) now under consideration, I wish to submit one or two remarks. I find in the letter of the Secretary of the Interior, addressed to the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, which was read yesterday, the following paragraph:

“The reasons explanatory of the necessity of employing clerical aid in the performance of the duties required of the department, which could not be postponed or neglected, and why no aid could be received by a transfer from the Treasury Department proper, are given in the second and third paragraphs of my report of the 3d of December last, accompanying the annual message of the President, and to which I beg leave to refer you.”

Now, (continued Mr. T.,) I beg leave to say to this committee that here is another instance wherein we cannot legislate advisedly; for that document, which was sent to the House in connection with the President's annual message, has not yet been printed and laid upon our tables. The reasons assigned by the Secretary of the Interior why this clerical aid is necessary, he says are contained in his report to the President, communicated with the annual message, which has not yet been printed and laid upon our tables. The first part of the President's annual message and accompanying documents has been printed; but the second part, containing Mr. Ewing's report, has not been furnished to us. I speak of it in order that the Committee on Public Printing may have their attention called to the subject, and, if they can find a remedy, I hope they will do so.

Mr. HARALSON. Will the gentleman allow me to make a suggestion in relation to this particular point?

Mr. TAYLOR. Certainly, sir.

Mr. HARALSON. The clause of the letter which has been read refers to the reasons why this additional clerical aid has been employed by the Secretary of the Interior. These reasons have not as yet, as the gentleman states, been published. They were contained in the report of the Secretary of the Interior, accompanying the President's message. Now, what they were we do not know. No man can tell what were the reasons operating upon the mind of the Secretary of the Interior which, in his judgment, justified him in that act. Would it not be well, therefore, for the gentleman who introduced this amendment to withdraw it for the present, and allow the bill to be passed with no provision on this subject? Afterward, when the reasons shall have been published, let a bill be introduced, and I, for one, will be ready to sustain it, if the reasons are such as to justify the action of the Secretary; if not, I shall oppose it. I am against voting in the dark. I want additional reasons. I do not want any thing to be left to conjecture.

Mr. TAYLOR. I do not propose to occupy much of the time of the committee.

Mr. FULLER explained, that the reason why the second part of the President's annual message and accompanying documents had not been printed, was, that, by the order of the Committee on Printing in both Houses, concurred in by a prominent friend of the Administration in the Senate, (Mr. SMITH,) who was a member of the Senate committee, the printing of that message had been deferred in order that the California message and accompanying documents might first be printed.

Mr. TAYLOR. I merely mention this fact to show that, while gentlemen are finding fault in Congress with the proceedings of the Secretary of the Interior, in employing additional clerical force to carry on the duties of the Department organized under the act of the last Congress, we are absolutely legislating without all the light which we ought to have. We have much, it is true. My distinguished colleague, (Mr. VINTON,) who sits before me, by his exposition this morning, has greatly relieved us. And I say now, with this exposition, and that of my colleague from the Montgomery district, (Mr. SCHENCK,) and the letter of Mr. Ewing, I am relieved of all doubt as to the propriety of this amendment, and am ready to vote for it.

Now, I find in the letter of Mr. Ewing, which I have before me, addressed to the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, several statements, which, it appears to me, have been overlooked by gentlemen on the opposite side, in their remarks on this subject.

One paragraph of that letter is as follows:

"The enclosed statement marked A, shows the number, salaries, and duties of the clerks not provided for by law, and now employed in the Department proper. By this statement, it will be perceived, that the aggregate salaries of the four clerks now doing duty therein, but who are yet upon the pay rolls of the General Land Office, Indian Office, and Pension Office, amount to \$5,700. These salaries properly belong to those bureaus, and are needed for the proper transaction of business therein; and so soon as an appropriation is made for the clerks necessary for this Department for the present fiscal year, as estimated by the second item, those salaries will be returned to those offices, and be applied to the payment of clerks doing duty therein. The aggregate of the salaries of the persons now employed as clerks in the Department proper is \$12,500."

The \$5,700, (continued Mr. T.,) being the amount of the salaries of the four clerks now doing duty in the Department proper, as stated in Mr. Ewing's letter, but who are yet upon the pay rolls of the General Land Office, Indian Office, and Pension Office, when deducted from the aggregate amount asked.

for of \$12,500, leaving \$6,800, which seems to be the only additional amount absolutely necessary to pay for the extra clerical aid in performing the duties required by the said Department.

I think when we establish a new Department of the Government, one having more patronage than any other, it is utterly impossible for any man to provide in anticipation for every contingency. It must be expected there will be some details, some expenditures, not to be anticipated in the organization of that Department; and it is for Congress afterwards to provide for such expenses as are deemed absolutely necessary. I think that this amendment of the gentleman from Pennsylvania should be voted for, and that we should uphold this Department of the Interior. It is one of great interest to the people of the interior, of especial interest to the people of the Western country, particularly to those who have to do with pensions, public lands, Indian agencies, patents--every thing, in fact, enumerated in the first ten sections of the law which prescribes the duties of the Secretary of the Interior. They are numerous and very important. They have already been referred to, but I hope the committee will pardon me, as I do not often trouble them, for adverting briefly to them.

I find that the duty of the Secretary of the Interior is, in the first place, to have the supervision of the Patent Office. Allow me to say that that is an office which should command the talents, the time, and the industry of any man among the first men of this country to discharge its duties faithfully. That is but one of the departments under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior.

I find, in the next place, that he has the supervision of the General Land Office, of all our land system, which is enlarging every year. He has also the supervision of the accounts of the marshals, clerks of courts, &c., throughout the thirty States of this Union—a very important portion of his duties.

In the next place, the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs is transferred to his care—a bureau growing every year more important, requiring the highest talent, the most persevering industry. This officer has duties to perform which would be sufficient for a separate department, if it were deemed advisable to create it. I think it is advisable. The vast tribes of Indians on our western frontier require the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior, and a careful execution of the laws by the President and General Government of the country, to avoid unnecessary collision with these savage tribes, which, if not very carefully and faithfully executed, might involve large expenditures of the public moneys. This is very important.

In the next place, I find the Office of the Commissioner of Pensions is under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior. He has also charge of the taking; and making returns of the census, an important duty now about to be performed. He has also charge of the office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, of the Penitentiary of the District of Columbia, &c.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it may readily be seen, that the Secretary of the Interior, with all these various bureaus, the importance of which we all acknowledge, has more patronage, more subordinates to supervise and direct, and is a more important officer, as far as these responsible duties are concerned, than any man in the Executive Cabinet. And because he finds himself obliged, in the discharge of his high public duties, to make reforms, to turn out the idlers and loafers, who are a tax upon the country, and substitute men of business capacity, and in some degree equalize the patronage of the Government, as the people of the United States have a right to expect will be done; it is because Mr. Ewing has found it necessary to do this, that we hear these attacks from various quarters upon him.

Mr. CARTER wished to ask his colleague (Mr. TAYLOR) a single question. Was the reason for the Secretary's requiring additional clerks the fact that he had turned out these loafers and put in smart men?

Mr. TAYLOR. My colleague made some allusion to those who have been turned out as being very competent and faithful officers, and to those who have been appointed as being very incompetent and unfaithful. I have not designed to reflect upon the gentlemen who have been removed, or to compliment those who have been appointed in their places. I have sufficient confidence in the Executive to believe that those whom he has displaced were incompetent, unfaithful, and unworthy, and those whom he has substituted are competent and worthy, and will meet the just expectation of those who have placed them there.

And now, one word to my colleague, who seems very much distressed that these loafers, as he terms them, have been appointed. It is very well known to every member of this House that, notwithstanding the reforms which have been made in this department, and in every department of the Government, the Democratic party have the majority of the offices now held in Washington. We hear clamors from the Locofoco presses throughout the country, and the charge is rung by Democratic members on this floor, and by their stump speakers, that the brave old hero and the eminent citizen statesman who fills the Presidential chair, has proscribed men for opinion's sake, when he has not even equalized the offices in the Departments, and given a just proportion of them to the Whigs of the country. I say it was his duty to turn out incompetent, unfaithful men. The people expected it.

Mr. THOMPSON, of Mississippi, said: If I understand the gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. TAYLOR,) he states that the majority of these men in office in Washington belong to the Democratic party?

Mr. TAYLOR. I am so informed.

Mr. THOMPSON. Upon what authority does the gentleman state that fact, and how has he ascertained it?

Mr. TAYLOR. Does the gentleman deny it?

Mr. THOMPSON. I certainly do deny it.

Mr. TAYLOR. Do you say that there is a majority of Whigs in office in Washington?

Mr. THOMPSON. The gentleman asserts that there is a majority of Democrats in office in the city of Washington. I desire to know how he ascertained the fact, and upon what authority? It is not so.

Mr. TAYLOR. Do you deny it positively?

Mr. THOMPSON. I do deny it. It is my belief that it is not so.

Mr. TAYLOR. My belief is that it is so; and, as the gentleman has no authority for so stating, the conclusion of my mind is, that he admits my statement that there is a majority of Democrats in office in this city. I state that I learn the fact from gentlemen connected with the Executive Departments, and I ask if any gentleman on the other side of the House is willing to rise and state, upon his honor and truth, as a man, that the Whigs have now a majority in the public offices in this city? I hear no reply. I have done with this subject.

I say it was the duty of the President of the United States to make these changes, these reforms; not to proscribe men for political opinions, but—

Mr. THOMPSON, of Mississippi. I wish to set this matter right. During the last Administration, the gentleman and myself were members of this House. It was then confidently stated in the circles in which I moved, and I believe it was stated by the present chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means (Mr. BAYLY,) that the majority of the officers in Washington during the administration of Mr. Polk, were Whigs. And since that time we know that large numbers of Democrats have been displaced, and Whigs appointed in their places; it is a fair inference that the Democrats are now largely in the minority.

[A VOICE. And growing beautifully less every day.]

Mr. THOMPSON, (continuing.) And, as it is suggested by a gentleman near

me, growing beautifully less every day. The gentleman asserts the affirmative. He asserts a fact, and then asserts that, unless we prove the contrary, we admit the fact. That is the gentleman's position.

Mr. TAYLOR. I will state to the gentleman from Mississippi what I did assert. I have no means of knowing exactly the number of Democrats and Whigs in office in Washington ; but I hear it stated by gentlemen connected with the Departments, gentlemen of high character and truth, that such is the fact, that the Democrats hold a majority of the offices in this city. I do not know the fact. I believe it is true ; but if not true, if any gentleman has knowledge to the contrary, I shall be very glad if he will rise and state it.

Mr. KAUFMAN rose and endeavored to address the Chair.

Mr. TAYLOR declined to yield, and proceeded. I have but a few more remarks to make, and I will yield the floor to the gentleman. I have been led into these remarks, contrary to my inclination, by what fell from my colleague over the way (Mr. CARTER) in reference to the changes which have been made in these Departments. I have made some remarks in vindication of the Secretary of the Interior, and I stated facts which I believe will justify me in making the appropriation asked for in that Department for additional clerk hire. I believe it is necessary for the public service ; and when I believe that such appropriations are necessary, while I have the honor of a seat on this floor, whether it is under a Democratic or a Whig President, I shall vote, as I have heretofore voted, not to withhold supplies, but to give all reasonable and proper appropriations required for the service of the General Government. During the last Congress I voted liberally every appropriation asked for by the Secretary of the Treasury, and I shall do so again. And during the progress of the Mexican war, although I was opposed to the manner in which it was commenced, I invariably voted every appropriation to carry on the war, and to uphold the flag of our country in honor ; and I rejoice to know, that while the Whigs are denounced on this floor as having opposed the war, the war was conducted under the direction of the two ablest generals the world ever saw, both of whom were Whigs—one of whom the people have already elevated to the Presidential chair, which he now fills with so much ability and usefulness to the country ; and if the other should live long enough, he stands a very good chance to reach the same high position, in spite of all opposition.

MARCH 21, 1850.

Mr. TAYLOR said, that if the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. BAYLY,) would allow him a few moments to explain what he said yesterday on the subject, and to reply to the gentleman from Mississippi, he should feel greatly obliged to him.

Mr. BAYLY said he would yield the floor, as he had yielded to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, I said yesterday, in the course of the debate on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. HAMP-
RON,) that I had been informed, and I believed, that notwithstanding the charges made against the Administration, and especially against the Secretary of the Interior, of making more removals for political purposes than any former Administration, that there were *now, at this day*, more Locofocos in office, in the general departments, in the city of Washington, than Whigs. And now, sir, since the gentleman from Mississippi, (Mr. THOMPSON,) has produced, in confirmation of his denial of what I said yesterday on this subject, a statement from some person, whose name he does not give, I propose to give to the House the result of my inquiries this morning. I have myself no personal knowledge on this subject, but I have before me a statement, furnished at my request by one of the clerks of a department, and by another gentleman, not in office, but intimately acquainted with the public offices here, and in which statement I

have reason to place entire confidence, and from which I will read, and publish in full in the report of our proceedings.

Here is the statement:

On the 4th of March, 1849, there were in the principal offices in Washington city, as follows:

<i>Democrats.</i>		
1. First Comptroller.....	\$3,500	14. Second Ass't Postmaster General 2,500
2. Second Comptroller.....	3,000	15. Third Ass't Postmaster General 2,500
3. First Auditor.....	3,000	16. City Postmaster..... 2,500
4. Second Auditor.....	3,000	17. Marshal fees..... 5,000
5. Fourth Auditor.....	3,000	18. District Attorney fees..... 4,000
6. Sixth Auditor.....	3,000	19. Naval Storekeeper..... 1,700
7. Treasurer of the United States...	3,000	20. Military Storekeeper..... 1,700
8. Solicitor.....	3,500	21. Commissioner of Public Buildings 2,000
9. Com'r of the General Land Office	3,000	22. Warden of the penitentiary..... 2,000
10. Commissioner of Indian Affairs..	3,000	23. Com'r of provision and clothing. 3,000
11. Commissioner of Patents.....	3,000	24. Navy agent..... 3,000
12. Recorder of the Gen'l Land Office	2,000	25. Public gardener..... 1,200
13. First Assist't Postmaster General	2,500	26. Captain of the Capitol watch.... 1,450

Paid to Democrats..... \$71,050

Whigs.—1. Third Auditor..... 3,000

Politics unknown.— { 1. Fifth Auditor..... 3,000
2. Commissioner of Pensions..... 3,000

Making..... \$6,000

The above statement shows twenty-six heads of bureaus and heads of offices in office on the 4th day of March, 1849, in Washington city.

And on the first of January, 1850, there were employed in the various departments, in the city of Washington, *seven hundred and twenty-four persons*, and at that date there was a majority of *fifty-two Democrats*.

Democrats..... 388
Whigs..... 336

Aggregate..... 724
Majority of Democrats..... 52

No removals since that time, up to this twenty-first of March, 1850.

I am not permitted to give the names of the gentlemen who furnished me this statement, but I have every reason to believe that they are correct and truthful men.

Of the above named seven hundred and twenty-four persons in office in Washington City, on the 30th September, 1848, there were—

Democrats..... 561
Whigs..... 163

Aggregate..... 724

Showing, at that date, three hundred and ninety-eight more Democrats than Whigs in said offices.

In the Land Office, on the 30th September, 1848, there were seventy clerks or more employed; and of the regular force of that office, only thirteen were Whigs. In this office more removals have been made than in any other; so that at this time there is about an equal number of each party. But, enumerating all the removals made since President Taylor came into office, there are still in the employment of the General Government, in this city, fifty-two more Locofocos than Whigs.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. BAYLY,) for the time allowed to make this reply to the gentleman from Mississippi, (Mr. THOMPSON,) and submit the statement I now present, in confirmation of what I said yesterday.